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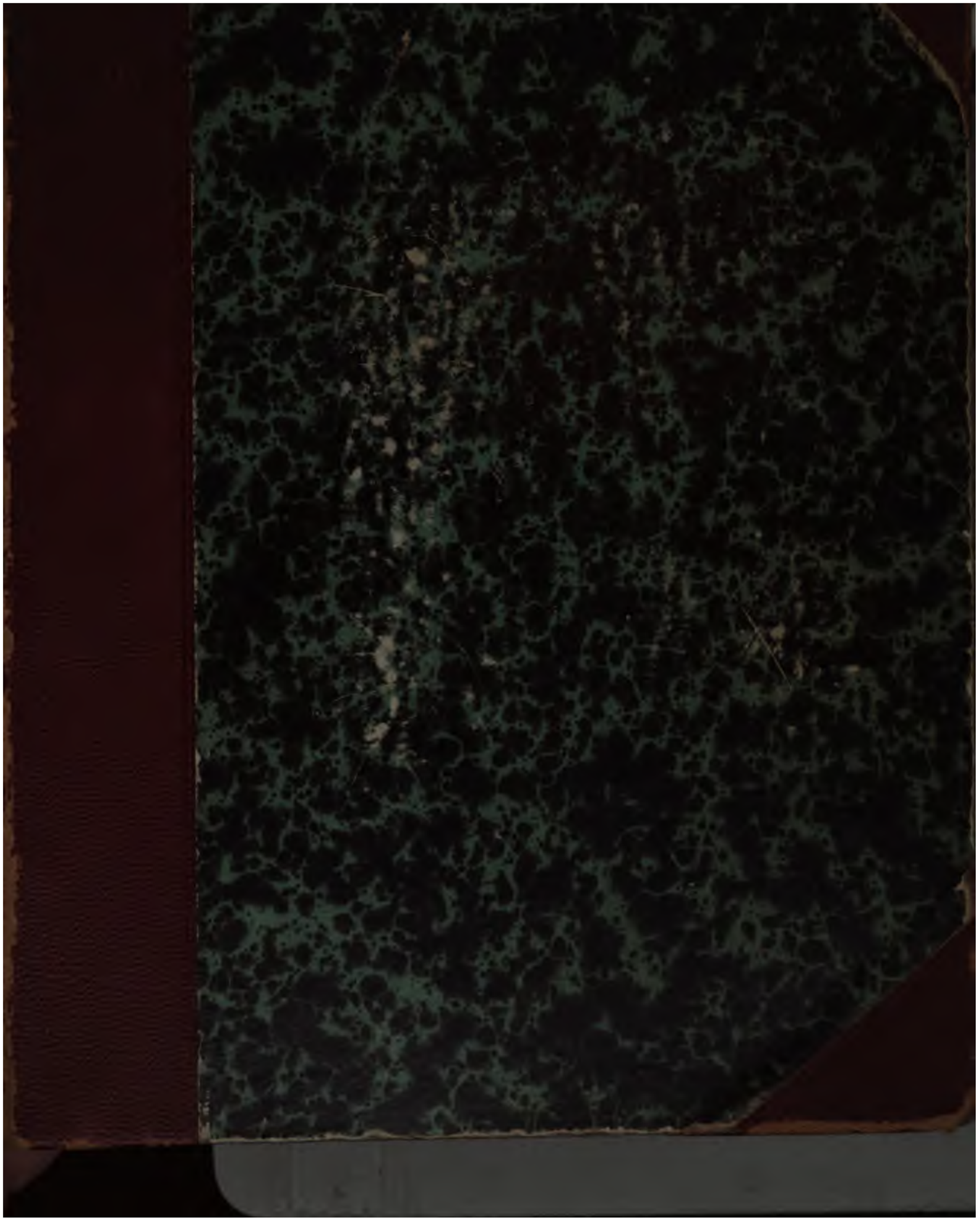

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(Class of 1849)
7 Oct, 1875.

Fac-ſimiles of examples from the Preſs

of

# WILLIAM CAXTON

at Weſtminſter.

By

Francis Compton Price.

London.

Priuately printed

M.D.CCC.LXXVII.

Fac-ſimiles illuſtrating the labours of William Caxton at Weſtminſter, and the Introduction of Printing into England.

WITH A

# Memoir of our Firſt Printer,

AND

# Bibliographical Particulars of the Illuſtrations.

BY

FRANCIS COMPTON PRICE.

LONDON,
Privately Printed, 1877.

[*The Four-hundredth Anniverſary.*]

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1878, Oct. 7
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*The number of copies of these fac-similes has been strictly limited to one hundred and twenty-five, of which this is the* **120th**

F. C. Price

# William Caxton.

SInce the Rev. John Lewis, of Margate, publiſhed, ſo long ago as 1737, "The Life of Mayſter Wyllyam Caxton," hardly a new fact, ſcarcely a freſh incident, affecting the biography of our firſt printer has been recorded; and to that work all ſubſequent biographers of Caxton owe their material. The incomparable monograph of Mr. William Blades has, however, rendered the ſubject capable of being ſatisfactorily ſtudied. It is not too much to expect, through the labours of Mr. Van Praet and others, that in the archives of Bruges there will one day be found intereſting particulars concerning thoſe who worked with COLARD MANSION, and we may hope that among the particulars yet to be diſcovered, many *new facts* relating to "The chief Engliſhman at Bruges" will not be wanting.

In the fifteenth century the citizens of London diſregarded the legal majority of man, and the indenture of an apprentice was always ſo drawn that the civic majority was not attained until the completion of the twenty-fourth year. We find in the vellum folio of the Mercers' Company [the entries extending from 1344 to 1464] that Caxton was entered apprentice to Robert Large in 1438 as appears by the following under that date:—

It. John large, } les appũtices de .....iiij$^{s}$
It. Willm̃ Caxſton } Robert Large

Ten, eleven, or twelve years was no uncommon term of apprenticeſhip at this time. Reckoning, however, the term of Caxton's ſervitude at the minimum of ſeven years, he could not have been more than ſeventeen years old at the date of entry, and therefore cannot have been born before 1421. The date of Caxton's birth being thus approximately ſet down, we have his own ſtatement that he was born in "Kent in the Weeld," though topographers are not agreed in what part of the "garden of England" the Weald is to be found.

## *At Bruges.*

Caxton's maſter, Sir Robert Large, "who dwelled in Lothbury," and "whoſe houſe ſtandeth in two pariſhes, S$^{t}$ Margaret's and S$^{t}$ Olive's," became Lord Mayor in 1439, and at his death, in 1441, bequeathed to his apprentice, who had ſerved him but three years, a legacy of twenty marks (a ſum equal to about 150*l.* of the preſent value of money). A year after Sir Robert's death, Caxton went abroad, ſtill an apprentice, to ſerve the remainder of his term in Flanders — probably to conclude buſineſs engaged in by his late maſter, who had been one of the richeſt and moſt powerful merchants in the city of London. It ſhould be remembered that Bruges, like Florence and Venice, was far in advance of London as a commercial centre in Caxton's time, and at that city the Engliſh merchants found their mart for the large conſignments of wool, then our chief product, and the Mercers' foreign trade far exceeded that of all the other Companies. Caxton took up his reſidence in the "Domus Anglorum," a ſemi-fortified ſtructure, erected to guard the foreigner againſt any turbulent outbreak of the populace, whoſe ignorant jealouſy eaſily imagined that the foreign merchants were ruining their nation — and he dwelled in the Burgundian Capital, ſaving rare viſits firſt to London and then to Ghent and Cologne, for thirty-five years.

Having worked out the three or four remaining years of his apprenticeſhip, Caxton was ſoon in buſineſs on his own account, and ſo proſperouſly, that in 1450 he was accepted as ſecurity for one John Granton, a merchant of the Wool-ſtaplers, who had their Staple of Wools at Calais, in the ſum of one hundred and ten pounds, which ſum may be eſtimated at ten times its preſent value. By an entry in the before-mentioned folio of the Mercers' Company, we ſee that Caxton was admitted to their livery in 1453; but for which glimpſe, we loſe ſight of him for ten years — during which time, however, he muſt have continued to be ſucceſsful, for in 1463 he became Governor of "The Engliſh Nation" at Bruges. This Aſſociation enjoyed great privileges — granted by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy. The Mercers' appear to have originated the guild, which was the Company of Merchant Adventurers under another name, with leave for other great Companies to ſhare in the memberſhip. In the following year King Edward the Fourth iſſued a Commiſſion and appointed Sir Richard Whitehill from his Court, and William Caxton, "a moſt fit perſon," to be his ambaſſadors and deputies to the Duke of Burgundy "for the purpoſe of confirming an exiſting

treaty of commerce, [which had been in force for a long time, but would expire in 1465] or, if neceſſary, for making a new one." Theſe negotiations were unſucceſsful, and the commercial relations between the two countries were interrupted, and not reſtored until the acceſſion in 1467 of Charles the Raſh, who wedded, in the following year, Margaret, ſiſter of the Engliſh King. The marriage was ſolemnized at Bruges with great rejoicings, of which an account by an eye-witneſs may be found in the Paſton Letters.

Caxton retained his poſt as Governor of The Engliſh Nation to 1469 — but about this time ſome reverſe of fortune apparently befell him. A Judgment, dated May 12, 1469, ſets forth a diſpute between an Engliſhman and a Frenchman who agree to abide by the deciſion of William Caxton and Thomas Perrot as arbitrators and common friends — but Caxton being obliged to leave Bruges for ſome cauſe not mentioned in the document, a full court of merchants was ſummoned, and the judgment declared in the names of the arbitrators. From Bruges, Caxton went to Ghent, and afterwards to Cologne; he was probably in the train of Edward IV., when that monarch was ſeeking refuge from the machinations of the great Earl of Warwick. But it is idle to ſpeculate as to what *may have been*, which is always the greateſt barrier to our obſerving what *is*. It is certain that Caxton received ſome appointment in the Court of the Engliſh wife of Charles, and became a favourite with the noble lady. In converſation, the Ducheſs elicited from him an acknowledgement that, "having no great charge or occupation," he had, before her Grace's arrival, commenced the tranſlation, from French into Engliſh, of *Le Recueil des Hiſtoires de Troye*, by Raoul le Fèvre. Diſcouraged, he had abandoned the taſk; but he tells us in his prologue to "The Recuyell," that his noble miſtreſs made him fetch his "five or ſix quires," and ſubmit them to her inſpection; and ſhe "commanded me ſtraightly to continue and make an end of the reſidue then not tranſlated—whoſe dreadful commandment I durſt in no wiſe diſobey, becauſe I am ſervant unto her ſaid grace, and receive of her yearly fee." Thus the mercer becomes loſt in the courtier; the tranſlation he began as an amuſement he concludes apparently with but little ſatisfaction, and it is finiſhed at length "in the holy city of Cologne in September 1471." The ſtatements of Caxton have led many bibliographers to the opinion that the "Recuyell" was printed at Cologne by Ulrich Zel, who would thus be

made the inſtructor of Caxton, who tells us in the epilogue to the third book that it was during its progreſs through the preſs that he learned the art; but Mr. Blades declares in favour of Colard Manſion, with many a cogent reaſon. My own opinion is that Caxton always refers to the *tranſlation* of the "Recuyell" finiſhed at Cologne, and that the "Recuyell," as afterwards "The Game and Playe of the Cheſſe Moralyſed," were printed at Bruges. Be that as it may, ſoon after "The Game and Playe of the Cheſſe" was printed, Caxton took leave of the land of his adoption, and turned his thoughts towards England, where he arrived laden with a freight more precious than the moſt opulent merchant adventurer ever dreamed of, to endow his country with that ineſtimable bleſſing, the printing preſs—the inſtrument deſtined to relieve mankind from the thraldom of ignorance, ſuperſtition, and vice. Towards the end of the year 1476, or the beginning of 1477, we find Caxton in occupation at Weſtminſter, his preſs erected in the Almonry, which was a building erected by a moſt admirable and excellent perſonage, whom the printers of England might well regard as their patroneſs—Margaret of Richmond, mother of King Henry the Seventh, who was the great patroneſs of learning, and, as we know, the friend of Eraſmus. She founded the Almonry, not for the purpoſe of encouraging printing, it is true, but for that of extending her charity to the neceſſitous of the neighbouhood, of which some veſtige ſtill continues in a dole which is given every Saturday to the poor of Weſtminſter in the Hall of the College of St. Peter. As far as can be made out, the Almonry ſtood near the great weſt door of the Abbey, at the entrance of what is now called Tothill-ſtreet, and as a matter of fact the Almonry was then included within the Abbey precincts. For many years an old building [which tumbled down in 1846] was pointed out as Caxton's houſe, but it was proved to be no older than the time of Charles the Second. This did not prevent parts of the woodwork being made into walking-ſticks and ſnuff-boxes, and preſented to various patrons of literature as genuine relics of our famous printer. Caxton himſelf tells us that he lived in the Almonry, and from the ſame ſource we know the very ſign of the houſe he inhabited—*The Red Pale*, which, it has been conjectured, might ſtand for Red *Pole*; but the far greater likelihood is that the ſign had a *heraldic* ſignificance, and was a ſhield of one of the heraldic metals, a pale *gules*. A curious hand-bill advertiſement, printed and circulated by Caxton *ante* 1480, furniſhes us with theſe particulars. Of this intereſting relic, the earlieſt Engliſh "broad-ſide" extant,

particulars are appended to the *fac-simile* [*Plate* 2]. From his houſe in the Almonry, Caxton iſſued all his important works, except the "Recuyell," the firſt edition of "The Game and Playe of the Cheſſe," both printed abroad, and the "Hiſtory of Jaſon," which laſt may have been printed either at Bruges or Weſtminſter. When Caxton ſtarted in England his whole ſtock of type conſiſted of two founts, a *church* or *text* type and a *secretary* type. Theſe founts he purchaſed in the Low Countries and brought with him. When they began to wear he procured new founts, with a ſmall fount of larger ſize for headings; but whether Caxton at any period of his career caſt his own letter ſeems now impoſſible to aſcertain with any certainty.

For ſome time he was buſied with the work of his patron, Anthony Wydevile, Earl Rivers, "The Dictes or Sayengis of the Philoſophres." This work is dated November 18th, 1477, the earlieſt certainty, and the real date of the Caxton anniverſary. If we had a book of Caxton's, as we have of Colard Manſion's, *Primum opus impreſſum per Willelmum Caxton*, it would be a different matter. As it is we muſt work upon the "Dictes" of November, 1477, until we know more. The "Dictes" is eſpecially intereſting from the fact that the concluſion of it affords us a ſpecimen of Caxton's own ſtyle of literary compoſition. His patron, the Earl, with whom he ſeems to have been on the moſt affectionate terms, having omitted to tranſlate certain concluſions of Socrates "towchyng women," Caxton ſupplies the omiſſion. Theſe paſſages are reproduced in the *fac-ſimiles* [*Plates* 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8].

About one hundred ſeparate works have come down to us from the Weſtminſter preſs, of which number no leſs than thirty-three are known by ſingle copies or fragments only. If ſo great a proportion of his work is unique, how much is loſt altogether? We are poſſeſſed in the various public and private collections, all told, of nearly ſix hundred volumes from Caxton's preſs. Had Caxton's opportunities allowed, he would probably have uſed wood-engraving to a much greater extent; the chief difficulty was no doubt experienced in obtaining the ſervices of an engraver — many of the blocks being badly cut into, and the draughtſman's work thereby deſtroyed. The beſt ſpecimen of the wood-engraver's art his works afford, and one which has been much praiſed for its

compoſition and feeling, is the well-known 'Crucifixion' [*Plate* 9] frequently ſeen in the books of Wynkyn de Worde, who received great credit for it until its earlier uſe was diſcovered as the frontiſpiece to Caxton's 'Fifteen Oes and other prayers.'

Caxton continued to work at Weſtminſter till his death, which took place at the cloſe of the year 1491. He lies buried in his own pariſh church-yard [St. Margaret's]. The preciſe ſpot is not known. The record of his burial may be ſeen in the Churchwarden's account books, which give evidence of a funeral more coſtly than uſual:

| | |
|---|---|
| It^m^ atte Bureyng of William Caxton for iiij torches . . | vjs. viijd. |
| It^m^ for the belle atte ſame bureyng . . . . . | vjd. |

No ſtone marked the burial place until the Roxburghe Club erected the ſimple tablet in the Church of St. Margaret. More than a century after Caxton's death, there was laid (in 1618) ſide by ſide with this Kentiſh worthy—this citizen-ambaſſador, author, and artizan—the headleſs corſe of one of England's greateſt children, Sir Walter Ralegh.

# Plates.

## Plate I.

An Indulgence granted by John Kendale, as legate from Pope Sixtus IV., to thoſe contributing to the defence of Rhodes againſt the Turks — on vellum, *dated* 1480. In favour of "*Symoni Mountfort et Emme vxori ei⁹. . . . ultimo die Mēſis marcij.*" The fac-ſimile is from the unique original preſerved in the Britiſh Muſeum, and bears the *earlieſt* inſtance of printed initials in England. The wavy appearance of ſome of the lines is due to the unequal expanſion and contraction of the vellum through damp. Purchaſed in 1846. [C. 18. e. 2.]

5.

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A paper communicated to the Society of Antiquaries by Sir Frederic Madden in 1837,* informs us that John Kendale was Grand Prior of the Order of St. John of Jeruſalem in England, and was remarkable from having been the ſubject of the earlieſt contemporary medal in exiſtence, of which the unique ſpecimen is now in the cabinet of the Duke of Devonſhire, bearing date of ſame year as the iſſue of the Indulgence. On the medal he is ſtyled *Turcopolier* or General of the Infantry of the Order—the office of which was annexed to that of Grand Prior of England.

Kendale was a perſon of the greateſt influence, for, beſide the power he had obtained from the Pope of granting Indulgences, he acquired the confidence of Edward IV. and Henry VII., who employed him in political negociations of great moment. In 1495 he was accuſed of taking part in a plot againſt Henry's life, but he was fortunate or crafty enough, not only to eſcape the King's anger, but to grow in ſtability with his Majeſty. In the Act of Attainder againſt Perkin Warbeck's adherents, though the Prior's name appears, a ſaving clauſe is drawn in his favour.

* *Archæologia*, vol. xxvii, p. 172.

Frater Johannes kendale Turcopelerius Rhodi ac commissarius A sanctissimo in xpristo patre et domino nostro domno Sixto diuina prouidencia papa quarto et vigore litterarum suarum pro expeditione contra perfidos turchos xpristiani nominis hostes, in defensionem insule Rhodi & fidei catholi & ac facta et facienda concessarum ad infrascripta p vniuersum orbem deputatus. Dilect nobis in xpo Salutē in dño sempiternā Prouenit ex tue deuotionis affectu quo romanā ecclesiā venereris. Ac te huic scē & necessarie expeditioni gratū reddis et liberalē. vt peticiones tuas illas presertim que consciencie pacem & anime tue salutem respiciunt ad quauditionis graciam admittamus. hinc est q nos tuis deuotis supplicationibus inclinati. tibi vt aliquem idoneum & discretum presbiterum secularem vel aut iusuis ordinis regularem in tuum possis eligere confessorē. qui confessione tua diligenter audita p commissis p te quibusuis crimimbz excessibz et delictis quantūcunqz grauibz & enormbz. eciam si talia fuerint ppter que sedes apostolica sit quouismodo merito consulenda. Iniectionis manuū in episcopū. vel superiorē. ac libertatis ecclesiastice offense. seu conspirationis in psonā aut statū romani pontificis. vel cuiusuis offense inobediencie. aut rebellionis sedis eiusdem. ac psbiteriadjj. casibz dūtaxat exceptis. In reseruatis semel tantū. In alijs vero nō reseruatis tociens quociens fuerit oportunū debitam absolutionē impendere & penitenciam salutarem iniungere. Ac omnū peccatoz tuoz de quibz corde contritus et ore confessus fueris. semel in vita et semel in mortis articulo plenariam remissionē & indulgenciā auctoritate apostolica concedere possit. dicta auctoritate qua p ipsius sedis lras sufficienti facultate muniti fungimur in hac parte indulgemus. In quoz fidem has lras nostras Sigilli nostri appensione munitas fieri iussimus atqz mandauimus. Dat Anno domini Millesimo quadringentesimo octogesimo

## Plate II.

Caxton's Hand-bill Advertisement, *ante* 1480. The firſt "broadſide" printed in England. From the copy in Bodley's Library at Oxford. (*Douce fragments.*)

Of this intereſting relic a ſecond copy is in the poſſeſſion of Earl Spencer. The advertiſement refers to an *Ordinale* of the Church of Saliſbury, printed in the ſame type; a collection of rules to ſhow how to determine the celebration of more than one office on the ſame day, *ad uſum Sarum.* Theſe collections were called "pyes"—the "pye" of *two* commemorations governed the moveable feaſt of Eaſter, which ruled Whitſuntide; and the "pye" of *three* commemorations included the offices for Eaſter, Whitſuntide, and Trinity.

This advertiſement has been already treated of in the Memoir, *q.v.*

If it plese ony man spirituel or temporel to bye ony pyes of two and thre comemoracions of salisburi vse enpryntid after the forme of this prelet lettre whiche ben wel and truly correct, late hym come to westmo; nester in to the almonesrye at the reed pale and he shal haue them good chepe ⁘

Supplico stet cedula

PLATES III., IV., V., VI., VII., VIII.

THE EPILOGUE to the first edition of the "Dictes or sayengis of the philosophres," 1477. From the copy in the British Museum. [C. 21. d.]

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That the 18th of NOVEMBER is the real date of the Caxton anniversary is shown by the unique colophon to Earl Spencer's copy of the first edition — this distinction is as follows:

**Thus endeth this book of the dytes and notable wyse sayenges of the phylosophers late translated and drawen out of frenshe into our englisshe tonge by my forsaide lord Therle of Ryuers and lord Skales ✠ and by hys comandement sette in forme and emprynted in this manere as ye maye here in this booke see Which was fynisshed the ✠ xviij ✠ day of the moneth of Nouembre ✠ & the seuententh yere of the regne of kyng Edward the ✠ fourth ✠**

This book, which has been adopted as marking the introduction of printing into England, is a volume of seventy-five leaves, seventy-two of which are occupied by Anthony Wydevile's translation. The last six pages, here re-produced, are from Caxton's own hand.

Here endeth the book named the dictes or sayengis of the philosophhres enprynted / by me William Caxton at Westmestre the yere of our lordy ✣ M ✣ CCCC ✣ Lxxxij ✣ Whiche book is late translated out of frensshe into englysshe / by the noble and puissant lordy Lordy Antone Erle of Ryuyers lordy of Scales & of the Ile of Wyght / Defendour and directour of the siege apostolique / for our holy Fadez the Pope in this Royame of Englondy and Goueznour of my lordy Prynce of Wales And Jt is so that at suche tyme as he hady accomplysshid this sayd werke / it likedy him to sende it to me in certayn quayezs to ouezsee / Whiche forthwith J salue & sonde therin many grete / notable / and wyse sayengis of the philosophres Acordyng vnto the bookes made in frensshe Whiche J hady ofte afore redd / But certaynly J had seen none in englisshe til that tyme / And so afterwardy J came vnto my sayd lordy & toldy him how J hady redy & seen his book / And that he hady don a meritory dede in the labour of the translacion therof in to our englisshe tunge / wherin he hady deseruidy a singuler laude & thank ce / Thenne my sayd lordy desiredy me to ouezsee it and where as J sholde fynde faute to correcte it / wherein J answerdy vnto his lordship / that J coude not amende it / But if J sholde so presume J might apaire it / For it was right wel & connyngly made & translatedy into right goody and fayr englisshe / Notwithstondyng he willedy me to ouezsee it & shewidy me dyuerse thinges Whiche as him semedy myght be left out as diuerse lettres missiues sent from Alisandez to dariꝰ and aristotle & eche to othez / Whiche lettres were litel appertinent vnto to dictes

and ſayenges aforſayd for as moche as they ſpecifye of other mateze/And alſo deſired me that my to put the ſayd booke in enprinte + And thus obeying hys requeſt and co maundement I haue put me in deuoyr to ouerſee this hys ſayd book and beholden as nyghe as I coude holde it accor deth with thorigynal keyng in Frenſh + And I fynde nothyng diſcordaunt therin + Sauf onely in the dytes and ſayengys of Socrates + Wherin I fynde that my ſaide lord hath left out certayn and diuerſe concluſions tow chyng Women + Wherof I meruaylle that my ſayd lord hath not writen them + ne What hath meuyd hym ſo to do Ne What cauſe he hade at that tyme + But I ſuppoſe that ſom fayr lady hath deſired hym to leue it out of his booke Or ellys he Was amerous on ſomme noble lady + for Whos loue he Wold not ſette yt in hys booke + or ellys for the fer ry affeccyon + loue and good Wylle that he hath vnto alle ladyes and GentylWomen + he thought that Socrates ſpared the ſothe + And Wrote of Women more than trouthe + Whyche I can not thinke that ſo treſſe aman & ſo noble a Philoſophre as Socrates Was ſhold Wryte other Wyſe than trouthe + For If he had made falſhe in Wrytyng of Women + He ought not ne ſhold not be beleuyd in hys o ther dytes and ſayinges + But I appreeyue that my ſayd lord knoWeth Weryly that ſuche defautes ben not had ne foundeu in the Women boxn and dWellyng in the ſe partyes ne Regyons of the World + Socrates Was a Greke borey in a ferre Contre from hens + Whyche con tre is alle of othre condycions than thys is + And men & Women of other nature than they ben here in this contre

For I wote wel, of what soeuer condicion women ben in Grece, the women of this contre ben right good, wyse, play sant, humble, discrete, sobre, chast, obedient to their husbon dis, trewē, secrete, stedfast, euer besy, & neuer ydle, Attempe rat in speking, and vertuous in alle their werkis, or atte leste shulde be soo, For whiche causes so euydent my sayd lord as I suppose thoughte it was not of necessite to sette in his book the saiengis of his Auctor socrates touchyng women But for as moche as I had comādemēt of my sayd lordy to correcte and amende where as I shulde fynde fawte, and other fynde I none sauf that he hath left out these dictes & sayinges of the women of Grece, Therfore in accomplisshig his comandement for as moche as I am not in certayn whe der it was in my lordis coppe or not, or ellis perauenture that the wynde had blowe ouer the leef, at the tyme of trās lacion of his booke, I purpose to wryte the same sayinges of that Greke Socrates, whiche wrote of the women of grece and nothyng of them of this Royame, whom I sup pose he neuer knewe, For if he had I dar plainly saye that he wold haue reserued them mespecialle in his sayd dictes Alway not presumyng to put & sette them in my sayd lor des book, but intende aparte in the rerersayll of the werkis humbly requiryng al them that shal rede this lytyl rerer sayll that yf they fynde ony faulte tarette it to Socrates and not to me Whiche wryteth as here after folowdeth

Socrates sayde That women ben thapparayles to cacche men, but they take none but them that wil be poure, or els them that knowe hem not And he sayde that ther isnone so grete empesshement vnto a man

as Ignoraunce/and Women ¶And he salde a Woman that kave fyre/of Whom he saide that the hotter kave the colder ¶And he salde a Woman seke. of Whom he sayd that the ayl restyth and dwellyth with the ayll ¶And he salde a Woman brought to the Justyce. and many other Women folowed her Wepyng/of Whome he sayd. the ayll ley sory and angry bicause the ayll shal perisshe ¶And he salde a Jong mayde that lerned to Wryte/ of Whom he sayde. that me multiplied ayl vpon ayll ¶And he sayd that the Ignoraunce of a man is knowen in thre thinges That is to Wete / Whan he hath no thought to vse reason Whan he can not refrayne hys couetises / And Whan he is gouerned by the conceyll of Women in that he knoweth that they knowe not ¶And he sayd vnto hys dyscyples Wylle ye that I enseygne and teche you /howe ye shal mo We escape from alle ayll /And they answerd/ye/ And them he sayde to them / For What someuer thing that it be. kepe you and be wel Waar that ye obeye not to Women Who answerd to hym agayn . And What sayest thou by our good modres & of our susteres/ He sayde to hem/Suffi se you/with that I haue sayd to you. For alle ben semblable in malice ¶And he sayde/ Who someuer Wyll acquere and gete science/late hym neuer put hym in the gouernall ce of a Woman ¶And he salde a Woman that made her fresshe and gaye. to Whom he sayd / Thou resemblest the fyre/ For the more Wode is leyd to the fyre the more Wolt it breme/And the gretter is the hete ¶And on a tyme one axyd hym / What hym semed of Women. He answerd That the Women resemble vnto a Tre called Edelfla

Whyche ys the fayreſt tre to beholde and ſee that may be
But Wythin it ys ful of venym ¶ And they ſayd to
hym and demanded Wherfore he blamed ſo Women/ and
that he hym ſelf had not comen into thys World ne none
other men alſo Wythoute hem . He anſwerd . The Woman
ys like vnto a Tre named Chaſſoygnet . on Whyche tre
ther ben many thynges ſharpe and pryckyng . Whiche hur
te and pryncke them that approche vnto hyt . And yet ne
uertheleſſe that ſame tre bringeth forth good dates and
ſwete . And they demanded hym/ Why he fled from the
Women . And he anſwerd . For aſmoche as I ſee them
flee and eſchewe the good . and comenly do euyll ¶ And
a Woman ſayde to hym . Wylt thou haue ony other Woman
than me And he anſwerde to her Arte not thou aſhamed
toffre thy ſelf to hym . that demandeth nez deſireth the not

TO theſe ben the Dictes & ſayengis of the philoſoph
re Socrates Whiche he Wrote in his book / And
certaynly he Wrote no Worſe than afore is reherſed
And for aſmoche as it is acordaūt . that his Dytes and
ſayengis ſholden be had as Wel as others therfore I haue ſet
te it in thende of this booke / And alſo ſomme pſones per
auenture that haue red this booke in frenſſhe Wold haue
arette a grette defaulte in me that I had not do my deuoir
in Viſiting & ouerſeeyng of my lordes book acording to his
deſir / And ſomme other alſo happely might haue ſuppoſed
that Socrates had Wreten moche more ylle of Women than
here afore is ſpecified / Wherfore in ſatiſfyeng of all parties
& alſo for excuſe of the ſaide ſocrates I haue ſette theſe ſaide

dytes & ſayengis a parte in thende of this book / to thentēt that yf my ſaydy lordy or ony other perſone What ſomeuer he or ſhe be that ſhal rede or here it / that If they be not Wel pleſydy Wyth alle that they Wyth a peme race it out or elys rente the leef out of the booke / Humbly requyryng and beſechyng my ſaydy lordy to take no diſplayſir oy me ſo preſumyngy but to pardone Where as he ſhal fynde faulte / andy that it pleſe hym to take the labour of thenpryntyng in gre & thanke / Whiche gladly haue doy my dyligence in thacomplyſſhyngy of his deſire andy commandement / In Why the I am bounden ſo to do for the goody reWardy that I haue reſſeyuedy of his ſaydy lordſhip / Whom I beſeche Almyghty gody tencreee and to contynue in his Vertuous diſpoſicion in this Worldy / And after thys lyf to lyue euerlaſtyngly in heuen Amen

Et ſic eſt finis

## Plate IX.

The Wood-cut of the Crucifixion, frontispiece to the "Fifteen O's and other prayers." From the unique copy in the British Museum, 1490–91. [C. 25. c.]

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The Fifteen O's probably formed a supplement to an edition of the Primer or Book of Hours, now lost. In the fac-simile upon the opposite page, the borders round the wood-cut in the original have been omitted as detracting greatly from the artistic merit of the representation. It is regarded as the most considerable wood-cut printed in England, *ante* 1500, and has been highly praised by Dr. Dibdin, and by Chatto and Jackson in their Treatise on Wood Engraving, 1838, second edition, 1861.

The design is undoubtedly admirable. Before the acquisition of the copy of the Fifteen O's by the British Museum in 1851, the wood-cut had been supposed to first appear at the end of Wynkyn de Worde's edition of the "Golden Legend," 1493, and this printer received great credit for it until its earlier use by his master was revealed.

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## Plate X.

Copy of the drawing contained in the *MS.* of the "Dictes" preſerved in the Archiepiſcopal Library at Lambeth. The *MS.* is a ſmall vellum folio, ff. 107, and is numbered 265. The preſent lithograph is taken from "Regal and Eccleſiaſtical Antiquities of England," by Joſeph Strutt, firſt edition, 1773, plate 47.

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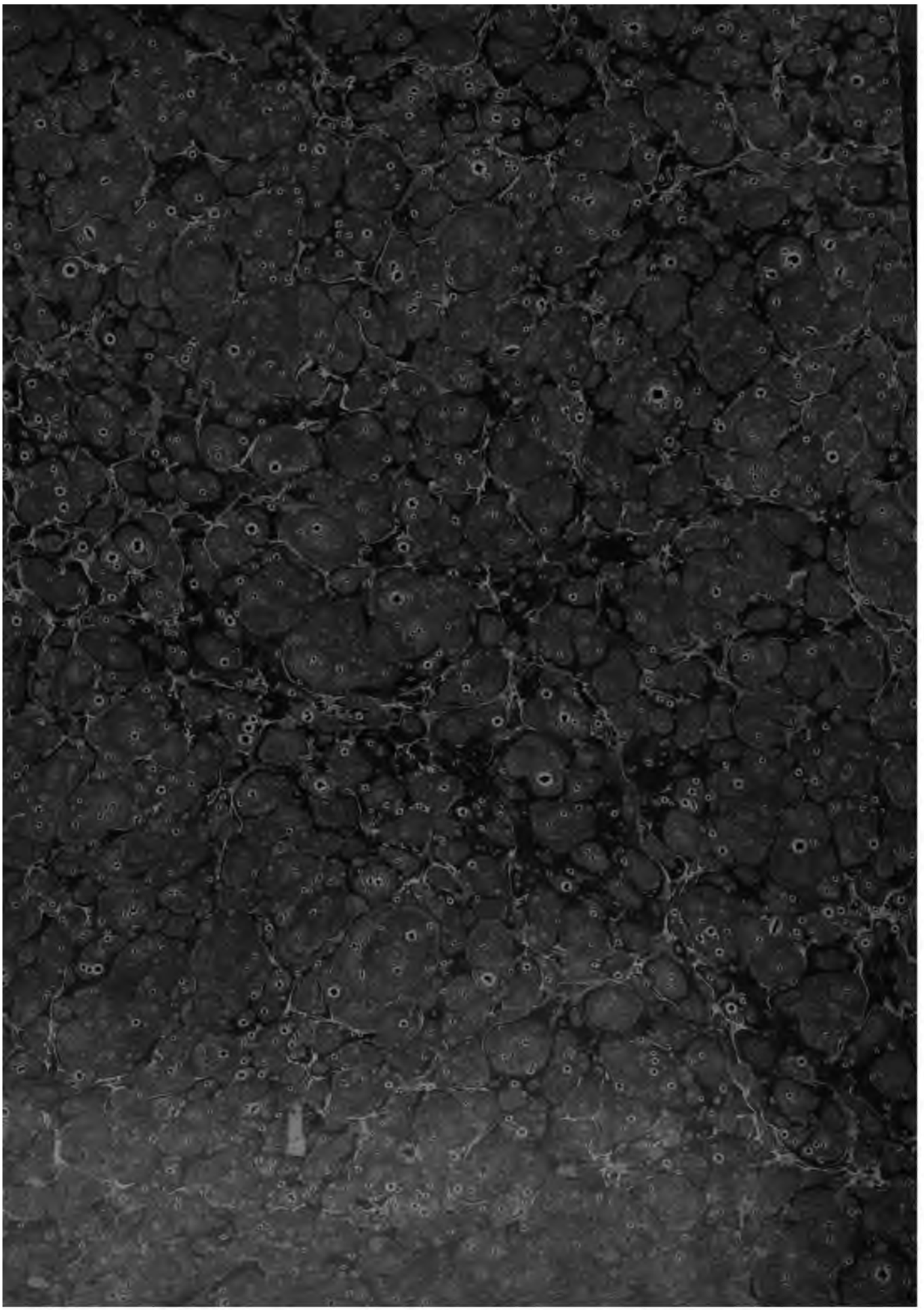
Conſiderable obſcurity hangs over the "head" of Caxton. A portrait of Burchiello, an Italian poet, from his work on Tuſcan poetry, 1554, was inaccurately copied by the famous engraver, Faithorne, for Sir Hans Sloane, as the portrait of Caxton. The Rev. John Lewis improved upon this by adding flowing ringlets, and a thick beard to Burchiello's chin; and the transformed Italian poet made his appearance in 1737 as frontiſpiece to Lewis's life of our printer. This ſame portrait again ſerved for the Memoir by Ames and Herbert. The "figure in black," in the defaced vignette of the Lambeth *MS.* alone has any claim to be conſidered an authentic portrait of Caxton, and this claim it is propoſed ſhortly to conſider. Dr. Dibdin, in his "Life," pronounces againſt it, without giving any very cogent reaſons for his objection; and Mr. Blades ſays that "unfortunately the figure is evidently an eccleſiaſtic as ſhown by his tonſure"—but that is by no means certain. We muſt remember, that in 1477 Caxton was nearly ſixty years of age, and, not improbably or unnaturally, had loſt his hair from the ſcalp; the ſcanty locks remaining are certainly not of a formal monkiſh cut—that may be obſerved of the figure at the back of the throne on the King's right hand; all the figures in the picture, whoſe heads are uncovered, have the hair cut ſtraight across the forehead as was the faſhion of the time, and Caxton has, with regard to his age, a goodly crop. The black gown is not neceſſarily eccleſiaſtical, and furthermore, the garment is edged about with fur, which hardly points to a monaſtic ſrock—indeed it much more reſembles a civic gown.

The famous antiquary, Strutt, (no mean authority) himſelf expreſſly ſays that he has done "the utmoſt in his power to render his work a perfect copy of the original," and it is tolerably certain that Strutt, who was hourly dealing with the *minutiæ* of coſtume, would immediately have obſerved that the figure in black had been intended for an eccleſiaſtic—yet he ſays nothing to warrant the aſſumption—but on the contrary, he thus deſcribes the vignette: "The king, queen, "and figure with a cap, are in blue and ermin, gold crowns, ſcepters &c., the

"prince, and the figure next the king are in red, the earl's coat as it is blazoned, "with blue legs. *Caxton is in black*; the figures behind are in pink, the throne, "arras, and carpet, are red and gold, floor green, walls lead colour, cieling blue "and gold ſpots, the book is pink and gold leaves."

A copy of the drawing, engraved by Grignon, forms the frontiſpiece to the firſt volume of Horace Walpole's "Royal and Noble Authors," Strawberry Hill, 1758, two vols., 8vo; and beneath the engraving is an inſcription in which the vignette is deſcribed as follows: "Earl Rivers preſenting his Book and "*Caxton his Printer* to Edw. 4., the Queen and Prince... The Portrait of the "Prince (afterw^ds^ Edw. 5. is the only one known, & has been engraved by Vertue "among the Heads of the Kings. The Perſon in a Cap and Robe of State is "probably Richard D. of Glouceſter, as he reſembles the King, and as Clarence "was always too great an Enemy of the Queen to be diſtinguiſhed by her Brother. "The Book was Printed in 1477 when Clarence was in Ireland, and in the "beginning of the next year he was murdered."

The teſtimony of Strutt, though ſubſequent to that of Lord Orford, is to be regarded as more valuable, but the chief evidence in favour of the authenticity of the portrait, may be adduced from the manuſcript itſelf. It is conjectured that the kneeling figure by the ſide of the Earl (who is fully identified by the coat armour he is wearing) is that of "Haywarde," whoſe name appears as the ſcribe at the end of the *MS.*; and the date of tranſcription is alſo given, *December 29th*, 1477, *or about ſix weeks after the appearance of the printed book.* Had the *MS.* been a hundred times more magnificent than it is, it would have "paled its ineffectual fire" before the glory of THE FIRST BOOK PRINTED IN ENGLAND, produced under the auſpices of the illuſtrious Anthony, Earl Rivers, the brother of the Queen, and governor of the Prince of Wales; who was inferior to none of that dark time in learning and politeneſs—brave as any who followed the fortunes of the Roſes—a Knight of the Garter, and diſtinguiſhed as a warrior and a ſtateſman, and who performed a graceful act in preſenting his book and his printer to the King, of which event the *ſubſequent* ornamented tranſcript and commemorative vignette is a memorial?



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